

FISCAL YEAR 36 ANNUAL ACTION PLAN

The City of Binghamton submits this Fiscal Year (FY) 36 Annual Action Plan covering the period of September 1, 2010 - August 31, 2011 for the three entitlement programs for which the City participates in: Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnership (HOME), and the Emergency Shelter Grants (ESG) Programs. This Plan represents the first year of implementing the City's housing and community development goals outlined in the 2010-2015 Consolidated Plan.

The City's FY 36 entitlement allocations are as follows:

- CDBG - \$2,523,074
- ESG - \$102,153
- HOME - \$757,630

General Questions

1. Describe the geographic areas of the jurisdiction (including areas of low income families and/or racial/minority concentration) in which assistance will be directed during the next year. Where appropriate, the jurisdiction should estimate the percentage of funds the jurisdiction plans to dedicate to target areas.
2. Describe the basis for allocating investments geographically within the jurisdiction (or within the EMSA for HOPWA) (91.215(a)(1)) during the next year and the rationale for assigning the priorities.
3. Describe actions that will take place during the next year to address obstacles to meeting underserved needs.
4. Identify the federal, state, and local resources expected to be made available to address the needs identified in the plan. Federal resources should include Section 8 funds made available to the jurisdiction, Low-Income Housing Tax Credits, and competitive McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act funds expected to be available to address priority needs and specific objectives identified in the strategic plan.

Program Year 1 Action Plan General Questions response:

GEOGRAPHIC INVESTMENTS

The activities proposed for Fiscal Year 36 will meet the national objectives of benefitting low/moderate income persons, eliminating slums and blight, or addressing an urgent need that threatens public health or safety. Fiscal Year 36 funds are being used to deliver quality programs that address current needs of City residents, positively impact underserved populations, improve areas of historic significance, and affect change in CDBG local target areas where 51% of the households in the target area meet HUD's low/moderate income guidelines. A chart of FY 36 activities and national objectives is provided in Section 4. Additionally entitlement funds will also be used to leverage additional resources to complement City revitalization efforts and policy changes.

Housing

The City's housing programs are designed to increase home ownership opportunities, maintain and upgrade existing housing stock, and expand access to affordable and quality housing. *The City promotes free choice and does not restrict applicants to select a residence within a CDBG target area, an underserved area, or any other specific geographic location.*

New this year, the City is proposing to use CDBG funds to implement a residential historic preservation program. The goal of this program is to provide small matching grants that will help homeowners that meet HUD's income guidelines maintain the integrity of homes that have a designation of historic significance or are located within a geographic area designated as historically significant. The program will be administered by the City's Historic Preservation Planner and will involve approval of program design and activities from the local Commission on Architecture and Urban Design. Consultation will be done with the NYS Historic Preservation Office when required.

Code Enforcement

Code Enforcement activities will benefit low-moderate income areas. Goals will be established to ensure properties within CDBG target areas comply with local housing and maintenance codes. The first year of program implementation will be dedicated to establishing annual goals for inspecting residential multi-units in CDBG target areas. This will require training and restructuring of staff resources.

Economic Development

Economic development activities are designed to improve economic conditions that will entice businesses to develop/grow in Binghamton and offer workforce training and job opportunities to persons with low/moderate incomes. Increasing economic activity is not limited geographically as it is encouraged wherever businesses have an opportunity for growth and jobs can be promoted and accessed by low-income persons.

Public Infrastructure/Demolition

Improvements to public infrastructure, which includes street and parks, will occur in CDBG low-income areas where at least 51% of households within a specific census tract meet HUD's low/moderate income guidelines. The City will also use entitlement funds to demolish blighted homes that either pose a particular threat to the health and welfare of the general public or negatively impact neighborhood value/appeal. Demolition of distressed residential properties will be addressed on a spot basis.

Neighborhood Development

Neighborhood development funds will be allocated to CDBG local target areas. Entitlement funds will be used to help carry out resident-driven projects that improve the quality and security of living environments. Funds will also be used to spearhead education and neighborhood improvement projects that promote sustainable development and environmental justice in low-income/underserved neighborhoods.

Public Service Activities

Public service programs will either benefit low-mod clients or CDBG local target areas. Funding for youth programming will involve collaborations and projects that will provide safe places for youth to learn, work, play and become engaged in community revitalization efforts. The City will continue to use CDBG/ESG funds to competitively procure services that address quality of life issues for low-moderate families and households. Lastly, the City will use entitlement funds to install additional security cameras and energy efficient lights in CDBG eligible Census Tract 13. This census tract is located in the City's West Side neighborhood; entitlement funds will be used to respond to residents and businesses growing concerns of public safety.

ADDRESSING UNDERSERVED NEEDS

Based upon the U.S. 2000 Census, the City of Binghamton's highest concentration of minority populations live within the following neighborhoods: Center City, North Side, First Ward, and South Side East. The Center City and South Side East neighborhoods contain several housing complexes including two operated by the Binghamton Housing Authority. 2009 CHAS data identifies that owner- and renter-occupied housing units of Black, Hispanic and Asian low-income households experience a significant impact with housing cost burden. Unfortunately, 2009 CHAS data was only provided at the Citywide level and therefore the City cannot correlate which census tracts with higher minority populations are experiencing housing cost burden. The City anticipates that the U.S. 2010 Census will be available in 2011 and will provide statistically reliable data that will allow us to correlate ethnic populations and housing needs in order to determine if there are disproportionate needs in specific geographic areas.

The primary approach the City uses to outreach to underserved populations is through partnerships with community agencies that provide essential services to the underserved, such as affordable housing, health care, day care/afterschool care, workforce development, education, and advocacy. When opportunities arise, City staff participate in workforce development workshops, housing fairs, neighborhood meetings, and agency meetings.

The City will continue to convene the Binghamton Healthy Neighborhood Collaboration (BHNC), in which many community agencies participate to help identify needs, resources, and outreach methods to address issues that affect underserved neighborhoods. For the past two years, the group has primarily focused on housing and workforce development issues around the implementation of the City's Restore NY grant awards. During meetings and forums held for the preparation of the 2010-2015 Consolidated Plan, community service providers recommended that homeless and community service providers be invited to join the collaboration. Since housing stability can be jeopardized by non-housing issues, having participation from a range of providers will provide key insight into program development, marketing and implementation.

The Green Collar Job Task Force, which is a subcommittee of the BHNC, has been working to leverage resources to support green workforce development programs and integrate education and workforce training opportunities into the city's housing and construction activities, with a focus on green building techniques, weatherization, and deconstruction. Key members currently involved in this effort include:

- City of Binghamton – Provide/leverage financial resources; promote/enforce policy change; identify potential on-the-job training sites; coordinate youth programming
- Broome-Tioga Workforce – Provide/leverage financial resources; provide education/job training opportunities; outreach to businesses, developers and residents
- New York State Energy and Research Development Authority – Provide significant financial resources for energy efficiency projects
- Broome-Tioga BOCES – Provide vocational trainings and programs to local youth and workforce, and connect enrolled students with community development initiatives that advance curricular goals
- Community College – Provide professional certification training; outreach to businesses, developers and residents; collaborates with NYSERDA to develop local pool of BPI-certified contractors
- Citizen Action – Advocate for systemic policy change to achieve social equity and justice goals; outreach and engage residents and community stakeholders
- Representatives from labor/trades unions – Provide apprenticeship opportunities

- Representatives from youth agencies – Assist with recruitment and serve as collaborative partners for developing educational and skill training opportunities
- Representatives from housing developers – Provide work sites for on-the-job training

The City is currently in negotiations with First Ward Action Council, Community Potential and Home Headquarters to transfer several residential properties targeted for rehabilitation under the City's Restore Round 2 grant. The City is awaiting approval from the New York State Affordable Housing Corporation (AHC) to use \$150,000 in AHC funds to assist with the resale of these properties. Should AHC approve the City's request, the City may be able to meet the goal of promoting more home ownership without using entitlement funds for this particular collaboration.

The City was awarded \$2.2 million under New York State's Round 3 Program. The City is in the process of finalizing site selection so that it may proceed with final submission activities, as required by the project sponsor New York State Empire State Development Corporation. The City anticipates using FY 36 CDBG and/or HOME entitlement funds to support Restore 3 activities, which include blight removal, home rehabilitation, and new infill, affordable housing projects.

One of the key changes implemented in the City's entitlement planning process was the solicitation process for human service programming. For many years the City requested competitive proposals at the beginning of the year which resulted in agencies forecasting community needs and budgets a year in advance. In 2009, the City requested agencies to submit their applications later in the year so that programs addressed current and critical needs of the community. Implementing this change did not compromise the City's ability to provide agencies with contract documents in January, which is the same timeframe for which agencies have typically received contracts.

The change was also instituted in order to provide the Community Development Advisory Committee (CDAC) with more time to conduct civic engagement activities and reflect on the use of all entitlement funds instead of the 10% of the budget dedicated to public service activities. As a result of this change, CDAC members began to positively question their role in the process. Both CDAC and the City realize that as representatives of the community, CDAC members play a vital role in raising community awareness about and resident feedback into how entitlement funds can be used to improve the community. During the first year of program implementation, the City and CDAC will be meeting earlier in the planning process and working together to better define CDAC's role and improving the civic engagement process.

Fiscal Year 36 funds will also be used to support programs that assist underserved populations, such as youth, seniors, disabled persons, and persons who are homeless or at-risk of homeless. ESG and funding from the City's Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program will be used to provide financial and essential support services to address homeless issues and client stability. ESG funds will also be used to provide technical support to enhance program delivery and operations of service providers, and to involve community members and organizations with documenting unmet needs, especially among homeless youth and families.

The City of Binghamton will continue to allocate dedicated funds for Youth Programming, and better integrate the solicitation and selection of public service programs with the City's Youth Bureau Advisory Board. In November 2006, the Office of Children and Family Services approved the City's plan to establish a municipal youth bureau. The City hired a Youth Bureau Director in 2007 who was charged with the responsibility of developing collaborative partnerships and leveraging resources that will engage youth in positive and meaningful community development opportunities. CDBG has been a vital funding stream to advance these goals. Over the last two years, the Youth Bureau has used CDBG funds to engage youth in neighborhood beautification projects, community recycling campaigns, videography projects, life-skills building exercises and summer employment.

The Youth Bureau is currently working with the New York State Office of Children and Family Services to strengthen the role of the Youth Advisory Board, and must submit a Five-Year Plan to NYS OCFS by the end of the 2010 calendar year. The City is confident that enhancing the Board's role and providing increased funding for youth programming in FY 36 will result in stronger collaborations and provide greater impact to youth and their families.

FEDERAL, STATE, LOCAL RESOURCES

The City of Binghamton has established the following housing priorities for FY 36:

- Increase home ownership
- Enhance access to quality and affordability of existing housing stock
- Eliminate slum/blight structures

In addition to CDBG/HOME entitlement funds, the following resources will be used or pursued to meet the above housing priorities:

New York State Restore NY Program – The City has leveraged approximately \$6M from this three-year program to demolish/deconstruct/rehabilitate/reconstruct over 70 blighted/distressed structures throughout the City of Binghamton. In FY 36, the City of Binghamton will be implementing housing activities under its Restore 2 and Restore 3 programs with its BHNC partners.

New York State Affordable Housing Corporation – The City has leveraged \$750,000 in three separate grant awards over the past three years. The agency is currently reviewing a request from the City to approve an acquisition/rehabilitation grant of \$150,000 to provide mortgage write downs to clients interested in purchasing properties rehabilitated under the City’s Restore 2 program. This year, the City submitted a \$280,000 application to assist with reconstruction activities under the City’s Restore 3 program. The application is currently under consideration.

New York State Housing Finance Agency – This State agency serves as an administering agency for two of the City’s new housing grants: Neighborhood Stabilization Program and Infrastructure Development Demonstration Program.

Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP)

The NSP is a federally funded program aimed at addressing vacant, foreclosed, and/or abandoned residential/mixed use properties. The City of Binghamton is using \$617,122 under the NSP Round 1 Program to demolish four blighted structures along Glenwood Avenue, to rehabilitate a vacant, single-family home on a key residential street in the Center City neighborhood, and to demolish and reconstruct one residential unit located in Binghamton’s southside neighborhood. The City anticipates meeting NYS HFA’s August 2, 2010 deadline to obligate all funds toward the aforementioned activities.

Infrastructure Development Demonstration Program

In order to receive funding from this program, applicants had to demonstrate an existing affiliation with a project that was active and funded by a sister agency of the New York State Housing Finance Agency (NYSHFA). One of the sister agencies with which the City has an active project is the New York State Affordable Housing Corporation (NYSAHC). Thus, the City was able to leverage \$150,000 of funding under this demonstration program. The program enables the City to offer \$10,000 of NYSAHC funds to complete rehabilitation improvements and up to \$5,000 in NYSHFA funding to complete infrastructure improvements. Infrastructure improvements include new driveways, curb cuts, landscaping, sidewalk repair, and upgrades to water, sanitary and sewer systems. The State provided the City with its agreement this year; the City is currently working with the State to obtain the necessary client documents so that implementation of this program can begin.

Section 8 Program – The City continues to offer vouchers to assist eligible clients with securing and maintaining affordable/quality housing rental units. As of May 18, 2010 the City of Binghamton’s Section 8 Program had an active client list of 363 households and 74 households on the waiting list. The program is under a voluntary freeze as the result of Director Abdelazim’s efforts to restore integrity to the program’s accounting procedures, remedy years of inaccurate reporting, improve workforce skills and technical performance, and complete a major audit and reconciliation effort of program finances. All of these efforts are being carried out in close consultation with a team from the HUD Buffalo field office.

The Section 8 Team also completed a full review and update of the City’s Section 8 Administrative Plan in FY35, which included raising the property maintenance standards. By redefining what will pass inspection by supplementing federal housing quality standards with more restrictive local property maintenance laws, the City can better assure low-income clients are in safe, sanitary, affordable housing.

McKinney-Vento Funds – The City assists community agencies that provide housing and supportive services to homeless or those persons at risk of homelessness by competitively distributing its Emergency Shelter Grants (ESG) entitlement funding. The Broome County Continuum of Care/Homeless Coalition also leverages Continuum of Care funding to support housing and supportive service programs for homeless persons/families. The 2010 CoC grant cycle is currently underway. The City is participating in the Coalition’s Funding and Development Subcommittee meetings to discuss programs that will apply for 2010 CoC funding. During FY 36, the City will be playing an active role with the Coalition to address priorities identified from the City’s 2010 community development survey pertaining to the needs of homeless youth and families.

Under the 2009 American Recovery Reinvestment Act, the City of Binghamton was allocated a three-year allocation of \$955,655 under the Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP). The purpose of HPRP funding is to assist homeless individuals and families who can rapidly obtain and maintain permanent housing and to prevent individuals and families with incomes at or below 50% AMI from becoming homeless. HPRP funds can be used to address various client needs including rent, security deposits, utility expenses, and case management. Clients can be assisted up to 18 months under the HPRP program.

The City has a formal agreement with the Broome County Department of Social Services to assist with implementing HPRP within our jurisdiction. The County also received a grant from the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Office to implement HPRP Countywide (except the City of Binghamton).

Demand for HPRP assistance under the City and County programs has been very high. As of July, the County had fully expended all HPRP funds through its program. Due to the volume of calls and cases managed under the City's HPRP program, the City granted a realignment for the County's sub-subcontractor Mental Health Association (MHA). As of July 2010, MHA had fully expended the \$200,000 of client financial assistance allocated under its Year 1 budget. The City approved a realignment to shift \$80,000 in client financial assistance from its Year 3 budget to Year 1. The City has also proposed to reallocate over \$75,000 in HPRP resources to increase MHA's case management and fiscal services. The City anticipates that this request will be approved by City Council in August.

As required by HPRP regulations, the City and County use the services of Northern Creations Consulting who is the technical administrator for Broome County's Homeless Management Information System. All HPRP partners meet on a bi-weekly basis to discuss and resolve issues in order to better serve persons who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness. The increase in case management capacity will allow MHA to better work with clients post-assistance and identify additional services that can assist with client stability (i.e., financial management, mental health services, credit repair, landlord-tenant mediation, etc.). This information will be used to widen the range of proposals solicited under the City's competitive CDBG and ESG request for proposal process.

Low-Income Housing Tax Credits - Low income housing tax credits provide developers with the ability to leverage financing to develop affordable rental housing for low-income families. Though undermined by the recent economic crash, the City and its housing partners will continue to access these funds as they become available.

Lending Institutions - During FY36, the City will continue to engage its designated Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDOs) in a series of roundtable discussions in which we strategize about untapped resources. Two identified thus far are:

1. Affordable Housing Grants through the Federal Home Loan Banks of NY
2. Stronger partnerships with local lending institutions and integrating Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) commitments into City affordable housing projects

Managing the Process

1. Identify the lead agency, entity, and agencies responsible for administering programs covered by the consolidated plan.
2. Identify the significant aspects of the process by which the plan was developed, and the agencies, groups, organizations, and others who participated in the process.

3. Describe actions that will take place during the next year to enhance coordination between public and private housing, health, and social service agencies.

Program Year 1 Action Plan Managing the Process response:

LEAD ENTITY

The City's Department of Planning, Housing and Community Development (PHCD) continues to be the primary administrator of the City's annual HUD entitlement programs. The Planning Department initiates coordination with other City departments and subrecipients to prioritize, implement and monitor projects.

As lead entity, the PHCD Department engaged with the following entities to develop specific aspects of this plan:

1. Binghamton Local Development Coordination and Binghamton Economic Development Office – economic development activities
2. Department of Public Works, Parks and Engineering – infrastructure activities
3. Youth Bureau – youth programming activities
4. Binghamton Healthy Neighborhood Initiative – housing and workforce development activities
5. Community Agencies – housing and non-housing community development needs
6. Community Development Advisory Committee – citizen engagement
7. Residents – prioritization of entitlement funds to address housing and non-housing community development needs

PARTICIPANTS

The Planning Department serves as staff to the Community Development Advisory Committee (CDAC), which is the formal public participation body for HUD entitlement programs as prescribed by City Charter. City staff are responsible for scheduling and publicizing CDAC meetings, recording and providing copies of recorded meeting sessions to CDAC members and the public upon request, and coordinating meetings between CDAC members, City departments and community stakeholders.

City of Binghamton

The Department also coordinates scheduling and publicizing notices to obtain public input as part of the planning process. Public notices are advertised in the local newspaper, City government complex and various community spaces such as supermarkets, public library, and public housing complexes. During the planning process, a minimum of two public hearings are held. The first hearing is held to obtain input before programs and activities are formally proposed for the fiscal year. The second hearing is held to receive the public's reaction to activities proposed for the fiscal year. Based upon public reaction, CDAC and/or the City may elect to revise recommendations/proposed activities as necessary.

The City maintains a mailing list of community agencies and residents who expressed interest in receiving HUD entitlement public notices. Public outreach notices were published in the Press & Sun Bulletin on 3/10/10, 5/14/10 and 5/16/10. Below is a list of agencies that were mailed notices and invited to participate in public outreach activities:

Community Agencies
BC Gang Prevention
Broome County Habitat for Humanity
New York State Electric and Gas
Southern Tier Home Builders Remodelers
Fairview Recovery Services
Press & Sun Bulletin
Lend a Hand
Broome County Dept. of Social Services
Broome Developmental Disabilities Services Office
West Side Neighbors Association
Binghamton City School District
Broome County Chamber of Commerce
Nursing Administration - UHS Binghamton General
UHS Foundation
Binghamton Housing Authority
YWCA
The Salvation Army
Broome County Youth Bureau
Sheltered Workshop for the Disabled
Susquenango Council Boys Scouts of America
ACHIEVE
Mothers & Babies Perinatal Network
Consumer Credit Counseling Service
Second Chance Scholarship Foundation
American Red Cross, Southern Chapter
Southern Tier Independence Center
B.C. Public Transportation
Broome County CASA
Action for Older Persons
Citizen Action of New York
Broome County Department of Mental Health
Refugee Resettlement Office
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority
American Civic Association
Family/Childrens Society of Broome County
Community Free Clinic
SUNY Upstate Medical Center
Southern Tier Celebrates
The Art Mission
Broome County Health Department

Community Agencies
Planned Parenthood of B.C.
Boys & Girls Club
Trinity Safe Haven Program
YMCA
The Syracuse Rescue Mission
Catholic Charities
Opportunities for Broome
Roberson Museum and Science Center
The Broome County Urban League
Mental Health Association
Crime Victims Assistance Center
Samaritan House
Volunteers of America
Literacy Volunteers of Broome/Tioga Counties
SOS Shelter
Binghamton Psychiatric Center
BC Council of Churches
Lourdes Center for Family Care
Jewish Federation of Broome County
Binghamton Business
Professional Association
The Addiction Center of Broome County
First Call for Help!
Educational Talent Search
Family Enrichment Network
Lourdes Hospital
Broome Community College
Broome County Board of Realtors
Broome Legal Assistance
First Ward Action Council
Susquehanna Day Hab
Community Options
Metro Interfaith Housing Mgmt. Corp.
Girl Scouts Indian Hills Council
Children's Home of Wyoming Conf.
Southern Tier AIDS Program
HAMA Associates, Inc.

The City of Binghamton also incorporated needs and strategies identified by the Binghamton Healthy Neighborhood Collaboration to improve housing and workforce development opportunities in the City. These meetings bring together representatives from public and private housing, unions, workforce agencies and other community stakeholders, all of whom are dedicated to providing resources to citizens that will help strengthen their individual households and neighborhood. As stated previously, the primary areas of focus for this collaboration are affordable housing, homeownership, and workforce development in emerging green jobs, such as weatherization, green building practices, and urban agriculture.

Binghamton Healthy Neighborhood Participants
City of Binghamton
Binghamton Neighborhood Assemblies
Broome-Tioga Workforce
NYSERDA
Broome Community College
First Ward Action Council
HOME Headquarters, Inc.
Opportunities for Broome
Broome/Tioga BOCES
Metro Interfaith Housing
HAMA Associates, Inc.
Binghamton Housing Authority
Community Potential, Inc.
Southern Tier Homebuilders
Tioga Opportunities
Plumbers & Pipefitters Local Union 112
NYS Dept of Labor
Broome County, DSS
Broome County Energy Advisory Board
Sheltered Workshop
M&T Bank
NBT Bank
HSBC

Following suit from last year's process, the Administration requested CDAC members to conduct their own neighborhood meetings. The purpose of these meetings was to raise awareness regarding the use of entitlement funds and to encourage residents to become active in the planning process. At the neighborhood meetings, CDAC members distributed educational handouts and community development surveys. *Usually formal public hearings attract less than 20 citizens; a smaller number elect to speak publicly. Eight neighborhood meetings were held and had an average participation rate of 15 persons. Admittedly some neighborhood meetings had greater participation than others, however, the City and CDAC will continue to work together to achieve balanced participation in all neighborhoods, especially in CDBG target areas.*

COORDINATION

The City will continue to convene monthly meetings of the Binghamton Healthy Neighborhood Collaboration. As reflected in the 2010-2015 Consolidated Plan, the collaboration will be strengthened by inviting additional partners that represent housing and non-housing needs particularly for extremely low-income persons.

The City's Youth Bureau is working to strengthen the role of its Youth Advisory Board and to continue developing strong community partnerships. The Youth Bureau recently participated in the submission of a Promise Neighborhood grant. Congress appropriated \$10 million dollars for Promised Neighborhoods. With these funds, the United States Department of Education will award one-year planning grants for projects in up to 20 of the nation's most distressed neighborhoods. The grant involves a partnership amongst several community partners representing schools, funders, youth advocate agencies, public media, and school/higher learning institutions, to holistically address youth development issues in select underserved neighborhoods. The funds will be used to direct resources to youth and their families within the most distressed neighborhoods in the City of Binghamton. The Youth Bureau will also be completing a 5-Year Youth Development Plan by the end of this year. The Youth Bureau and Planning Department will be outreaching to homeless service providers and community agencies to address unmet needs, program delivery and operations. Gleaned from the City's 2010 Community Development Survey the City will work with community agencies to further explore respondents' high prioritization of using entitlement funds to address the needs of homeless youth and families. Lastly, the Youth Bureau will have an active role in reviewing and recommending public service programs that should be funded under the City's competitive request for proposal process.

Finally, the City has been participating for two years in the Broome County Strategic Alliance for Health, which brings together health officials and advocates, planners, senior advocates, and other care providers, to develop and advance policies and programs that create healthier and more livable neighborhoods, with a particular focus on youth and elderly. Recognizing the social, economic and environmental benefits of improving our built environments for all residents, the City has facilitated the expansion of this dialogue to include food security advocates (Rural Health Network), County and regional planners, environmental advocates, housing agencies, developers, and academic partners under the umbrella of a “Southern Tier Smart Growth Alliance.” The common goal is to create livable, sustainable communities across our region while advancing social equity, justice and inclusion goals. The City and many partners in the Smart Growth Alliance have set a goal to apply for a Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant in 2011, with the City as the lead agency, to build consensus around a regional vision that focuses and informs our work across all sectors.

Citizen Participation

1. Provide a summary of the citizen participation process.
2. Provide a summary of citizen comments or views on the plan.
3. Provide a summary of efforts made to broaden public participation in the development of the consolidated plan, including outreach to minorities and non-English speaking persons, as well as persons with disabilities.
4. Provide a written explanation of comments not accepted and the reasons why these comments were not accepted.

*Please note that Citizen Comments and Responses may be included as additional files within the CPMP Tool.

Program Year 1 Action Plan Citizen Participation response:

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

The development of the FY 36 Action Plan was driven by community outreach from the City’s Planning Department and the Community Development Advisory Committee (CDAC). CDAC is the formal public participation body that represents the interests of community stakeholders throughout the City’s seven Council Districts. The membership format consists of an appointed representative from each Council District, three Mayoral appointees and one ‘at large’ appointee of City Council. CDAC provides recommendations as to which activities should be considered for funding, concerns that should be addressed in future planning processes, and improvements for strengthening the planning process.

CDAC met in February to hear the history and purpose of the federal entitlement programs, prior budgets and past achievements, and current trends and priorities. Director Abdelazim and Grants Administrator Jennifer Taylor were present at all meetings and facilitated these discussions.

The CDAC facilitated its first public hearing on March 22, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. in City Council Chambers, a handicap accessible facility. The first public hearing provided an opportunity for citizens to inform the administration of goals that the City should consider when preparing the 5-year Consolidated Plan and activities that the City should consider funding with FY 36 funds. The CDAC's second public hearing was scheduled on May 24, 2010 at 5:00 p.m. in City Council Chambers. The second public hearing provided citizens the opportunity to share feedback and comments with respect to the goals and activities that were proposed (or those not proposed), within the draft 5-Year Consolidated Plan and draft FY 36 Action Plan.

Notices for the public hearings were advertised in the community section of the local Press & Sun Bulletin newspaper. Notices were also mailed to community agencies and interested persons that are on the City's mailing list. Fliers were also posted in community spaces such as the Broome County Public Library and supermarkets. Fliers were also distributed to publicly- and privately managed housing complexes and senior centers located in low-income area census tracts. The City's Director of Communications submitted a press release to local media organizations, local listservs, and posted the release on the City's web site. Every effort was made to obtain as much public input as possible from various demographic groups.

As stated in the previous section, the Administration requested CDAC members to convene their own community meetings as a means to broaden public participation and to engage residents in "their" space. Some CDAC members elected to partner with their Neighborhood Assembly group. Launched and supported by Mayor Ryan in his first term, Neighborhood Assemblies provide citizens with the opportunity to come together in neighborhood settings and to identify issues, problem solve, and work together to identify the essential resources needed to address specific concerns and actively participate in the course of action. Some CDAC members elected to use other community platforms such as their local neighborhood watch group. Another CDAC member used a more informal method of engagement by approaching his neighbors in restaurants, supermarkets, and in their neighborhood block.

The City advertised to the public that written comments regarding the goals and activities proposed within the draft 2010-2015 Consolidated Plan and draft FY 36 Action Plan were encouraged and would be received for a 30-day period ending June 18, 2010 at 4:00 p.m. One comment was received from the YWCA supporting the draft version of the 5-year Consolidated Plan.

The YWCA's written comments and public hearing comments are provided in Section 7.

Institutional Structure

1. Describe actions that will take place during the next year to develop institutional structure.

Program Year 1 Action Plan Institutional Structure response:

The City has committed to building partnerships and leveraging additional resources through the Binghamton Healthy Neighborhood Collaboration (BHNC). The initiative has two active committees: Housing and Homeownership Committee, and Green Jobs Committee.

The Housing and Homeownership Committee consists of realtors, community housing development organizations (CHDOs), and home counseling agencies to remove blight, expand affordable housing opportunities in the City, and identify and counsel potential first-time, income-eligible homebuyers. The Committee will work this year to: (i) develop a "pipeline for homeownership," centralizing and expanding counseling services at MetroInterfaith Housing Corporation; (ii) assist in improving organizational capacity of our local CHDOs, (iii) better coordinate housing investments consistent with City planning documents (Comprehensive Plan, 5-Year Consolidated Plan, Commission on Housing and Homeownership Final Report, etc.), and (iv) develop and raise awareness of shared equity homes as a way to expand affordable housing opportunities in the City.

The Green Jobs Committee of the BHNC focuses on integrating workforce training opportunities (particularly in green practices) into the City's housing initiatives. This year, the committee will pursue resources to expand and implement green workforce development programs in Binghamton, building off early successes of the BHNC. This program will help spur educational and job opportunities while simultaneously implementing recommendations outlined in the recently published Smart Growth and Sustainability Report prepared by the City's Commission on Sustainable Development and Smart Growth.

The City has also formed a Green Team to prioritize and implement the final recommendations of the Commission on Sustainable Development & Smart Growth. This commission was one of four in which the administration and City Council convened experts and engaged residents for more than a year to analyze, research and issue recommendations on four key issues deemed essential to city finances and the future of Binghamton: sustainable development; housing and homeownership; public safety and personnel costs; sanitation. The Commission on Sustainable Development & Smart Growth was charged with identifying best practices around issues that affect the City's economic, environmental, and social health, including

stormwater management, climate protection, historic preservation, green jobs, and zoning and land use.

The City will also work with homeless service providers and community agencies to assist in assessing youth development needs and gaps in program delivery as part of the 5-Year Youth Development Plan. The City will actively participate in the development of the 2010 CoC application and to work with the Homeless Coalition in strengthening the methodology of documenting unmet needs.

The City is fortunate to have established institutional structures in place to advance the FY36 goals of affordable housing and quality living. The City will rely on these entities in implementing FY 36 activities:

Participating Committee(s)	FY 36 Activity	Entitlement Funding Source
BHNC Blight Prevention Task Force Green Team Commission on Architecture and Urban Design Climate Action Plan Advisory Committee	Housing	CDBG/HOME
Binghamton Local Development Corporation	Economic Development	CDBG
Capital Improvement Team	Public Infrastructure	CDBG
Youth Bureau	Public Services	CDBG/ESG
BHNC Blight Prevention Task Force	Demolition	CDBG
BHNC Shade Tree Commission Youth Bureau Neighborhood Assemblies	Neighborhood Development	CDBG
Blight Prevention Task Force	Code Enforcement	CDBG

Monitoring

1. Describe actions that will take place during the next year to monitor its housing and community development projects and ensure long-term compliance with program requirements and comprehensive planning requirements.

Program Year 1 Action Plan Monitoring response:

Director Abdelazim has instituted a series of internal reviews since assuming lead of the department, and is proposing a range of operational and organizational reforms to improve departmental productivity and enhance performance.

Over the last two years, the department has posted tremendous success in securing additional resources for planning, housing and community development activities. However, the success has strained the organization's capacity, and the FY36 Action Plan reflects some of the management reforms intended to address this challenge.

First, the Director has re-focused the City's Grants Administrator to serve more as a "HUD Compliance Officer." The position will be responsible for handling all compliance issues, reporting and technical assistance for all HUD funded programs (including CDBG, HOME, ESG, NSP, HPRP, Section 8). By better defining this position's role, the City expects to quickly strengthen and improve compliance across all HUD funded programs. As part of this reform measure, the Grants Administrator in FY36 will also develop standard operating procedures and begin hosting workshops for staff and subrecipients to ensure uniform development of these skill-sets throughout the department and within community service agencies.

In order to maintain the capacity to secure other federal and state grants, the Director has also proposed re-classifying the Neighborhood Services position to a second Grants Manager position. During FY36, the Grants Manager will work with PHCD divisions (Economic Development, Planning, and Housing), the Capital Improvement Team (Engineering, Public Works, Parks, Water/Sewer), and the Youth Bureau to identify grant opportunities, develop and submit grant applications, and manage all grant awards through final reporting and close-out.

The budget also includes dedicated lines for training in each division, and the staff will be expected to attend technical workshops on monitoring and compliance—above and beyond those conducted internally by the Grants Administrator.

Finally, reporting forms are being reviewed, updated and attached to all subrecipient agreements to ensure uniformity with IDIS and/or other reporting systems related to HUD entitlement funding.

The above reforms will not only increase staff productivity, but also improve the City's existing efforts to monitor housing and community development projects and track compliance. Currently, all subrecipients that are awarded entitlement funds are required to enter into a formal contract with the City. The contract outlines local and federal programmatic requirements for which the subrecipient must follow. Contract documents include language regarding retention of records and inform subrecipients that records are subject to review by the City, HUD and Inspector General.

Housing staff perform periodic inspections of housing repair activities for projects funded under the City's Affordable Housing Programs throughout the construction period. Housing staff manage disputes between clients and contractors to resolve work complaints during construction and one year after project completion. Clients can also call housing staff during their occupancy period to identify resources that can help with housing maintenance issues.

CHDO projects assisted with HOME funds are annually inspected by the City's Housing Coordinators and City Building Inspector to ensure compliance with affordability, local housing quality standards (including common areas), and affirmative marketing standards. The Housing Coordinator also performs an on-site review of the standard reporting documentation. This review includes current project rent rolls (number of units, tenant, household size, rent, etc), project financial statements reflecting operating and replacement reserve accounts, the CHDO certified annual audit/financial report, etc. The length of the affordability and compliance inspection period is tied into the amount of HOME funds per assisted unit which ranges from 5-20 years.

CDBG and ESG human service agencies are subject to an annual site visit to verify applicant eligibility and to see program delivery in action when possible. The City provides CDBG agencies with a Client Intake Form to document client residency and income eligibility. Agencies are also provided with ethnicity reports and narrative reports to submit on a quarterly basis. ESG agencies are provided with an ESG activity report to document the populations of homeless adults and children served, the types of services offered and accomplishments of the ESG-funded program. All forms provided to subrecipients are annually evaluated to determine whether changes are required to ensure compliance with federal program requirements.

Traditionally, the City's Grants Administrator conducts site visits to CDBG/ESG funded agencies. New this year the City's Youth Bureau Director will also attend site visits to agencies serving youth and the City's Housing Director will attend site visits to agencies that provide housing. This will provide an opportunity to provide recommendations to enhance the quality of programs and housing.

Recipients of CDBG/ESG funds are paid on a reimbursement basis. Recipients must submit a Claim for Payment Form as prescribed by the City of Binghamton and attach supporting payment documentation. The Claim and documentation are audited by Planning staff and the City Comptroller's Office before payment is disbursed.

Lead-based Paint

1. Describe the actions that will take place during the next year to evaluate and reduce the number of housing units containing lead-based paint hazards in order to increase the inventory of lead-safe housing available to extremely low-income, low-income, and moderate-income families, and how the plan for the reduction of lead-based hazards is related to the extent of lead poisoning and hazards.

Program Year 1 Action Plan Lead-based Paint response:

Addressing lead-based paint has been a component of the City's housing programs for over 10 years. The City documents that persons receiving assistance through the City's First Time Homebuyer Program and Housing Rehabilitation Programs were provided with the *"Protect Your Family From Lead in Your Home"*, published by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Through the City's formal agreement with its certified risk assessor EcoSpect, third party risk assessments and clearance tests are performed for all houses rehabilitated under the City's housing programs. The Housing Department records a separate mortgage for the loan amount used to address lead hazards. This loan is completely forgiven if clients maintain their assisted unit as their principal place of residence for more than five years from the project completion date.

Over the past three years, the Housing Staff has coordinated with the City's Building Bureau to distribute information to contractors who were obtaining building permits in order to attract more contractors who were certified in lead safe work practices to participate in the City's housing programs. This information will highlight the benefits of the City's housing program in meeting federal lead regulations including third party lead hazard testing and record maintenance.

The City's Housing Staff will also work closely with the Broome County Department of Health to remediate lead hazard issues. The Department of Health maintains documentation of households with children that have elevated lead levels. The City will develop a client release form and request the Department of Health to provide this form to parents/legal guardians of children who test positive for elevated lead levels. For rental households, the City will ensure that landlords who own property with children that test with elevated lead levels, do not continue to benefit from Section 8 or HPRP rental assistance unless the unit passes reinspection. These landlords will be approached by the City's Housing Inspector to immediately remediate potential lead hazard area(s). If the area(s) is not remediated, clients will be assisted with relocation. For income eligible owner occupied households with elevated lead levels located in the City, the City will outreach to the family to determine if entitlement resources can address the lead hazard issue as an urgent need.

HOUSING

Specific Housing Objectives

*Please also refer to the Housing Needs Table in the Needs.xls workbook.

1. Describe the priorities and specific objectives the jurisdiction hopes to achieve during the next year.

2. Describe how Federal, State, and local public and private sector resources that are reasonably expected to be available will be used to address identified needs for the period covered by this Action Plan.

Program Year 1 Action Plan Specific Objectives response:

The City's Housing Programs will continue to focus on increasing homeownership opportunities. The Affordable Housing Program addresses three areas: 1) increase the number of owner-occupied housing units; 2) address lead hazards; and 3) improve housing stock to meet and exceed federal Housing Quality Standards.

In Fiscal Year 36 entitlement funds will be used to meet the following housing objectives:

Housing Goal 1: Promote Homeownership
Objective 1 Provide financial assistance to help homeowners with acquisition costs. FY 36 Proposed Outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide home ownership counseling to 6 new homeowners.• Provide down payment/closing cost assistance to 6 new homeowners.
Objective 2 Support programs that encourage responsible homeownership and property maintenance. FY 36 Proposed Outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none">• City's Planning and Housing Department will coordinate efforts to develop reporting form for all federally assisted housing projects to annually document compliance with City's housing and property maintenance code.
Objective 3 Affirmatively market homebuyer programs to local lending institutions, community agencies (especially those serving ethnic, disabled and senior populations) and within census tracts with 51%+ low-income households. FY 36 Proposed Outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work with Broome County GIS Department to map concentrations of HUD eligible income households, and ethnic, elderly and disabled populations based upon U.S. 2010 Census data when available.• Outreach to local lending institutions to discuss programs and financial packages that can assist low-income families in securing affordable mortgages.

Objective 4

Promote initiatives that enhance neighborhood safety and livability to attract and retain new homeowners.

FY 36 Proposed Outcomes

- Install security cameras and energy efficient lights in City's West Side neighborhood.
- Support Design Your Own Park Contest, a collaboration between City of Binghamton, Binghamton University, and United Way of Broome County, in which residents are empowered to adopt vacant lots, work in teams to design new recreational spaces, implement design, and retain ownership and maintenance responsibilities

Housing Goal 2: Improve affordability, accessibility and quality of existing housing stock

Objective 1

Support affordable housing repair programs that offset cost burden to low-income families.

FY 36 Proposed Outcomes

- Provide housing repair grants and deferred loans to at least 22 owner-occupied low-income families.
- Target public service funds to assist at least 30 elderly/disabled owner-occupied households with essential housing repair services.

Objective 2

Partner with qualified housing developers to rehabilitate/redevelop affordable renter and owner-occupied housing.

FY 36 Proposed Outcomes

- Engage homeless service providers to discuss permanent needs of homeless service providers.
- Work with Blight Prevention Task Force to identify vacant property sites appropriate for residential redevelopment
- Allocate funds to at least one CHDO project that will either develop an affordable owner-occupied housing structure or develop affordable renter-occupied housing .

Objective 3

Enhance capacity and leverage additional housing resources from private and public entities either independently or in conjunction with experienced community partners.

FY 36 Proposed Outcomes

- Use entitlement funds to help CHDOs leverage additional resources for at least one affordable housing project.
- Hire qualified Grants Writer/Manager to work with Housing Division and BHNI to leverage new grant opportunities.

Objective 4

Affirmatively market home repair programs to local lending institutions, community agencies (especially those serving ethnic, disabled and senior populations), and within census tracts with 51%+ low-income households.

FY 36 Proposed Outcomes

- Work with Broome County GIS Department to map concentrations of HUD eligible income households, and ethnic, elderly and disabled populations based upon U.S. 2010 Census data when available.
- Outreach to local lending institutions to discuss programs and financial packages that can assist low-income families in securing affordable home repair loans.

Objective 5

Limit resale of publicly assisted housing to ensure affordability to low-income families over the long-term.

FY 36 Proposed Outcomes

- Develop deed restriction language and raise awareness among CHDOs and other partners about resale strategies to preserve affordability
- Incorporate deed restriction language in contracts when subsidizing mortgages for the sale of new homes.

Objective 6

Whenever feasible, incorporate energy-efficient design standards and features in housing projects, such as LEED, universal design and/or Energy Star®

FY 36 Proposed Outcomes

- Work with Climate Action Plan Advisory Board and NYSERDA to incorporate green building standards in City's housing programs

Housing Goal 3: Aggressively enforce federal, state and local housing codes
<p>Objective 1 Cite and follow-up on citations to correct property code violations.</p> <p>FY 36 Proposed Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop report that documents amount of citations and correction of code violations that occurred in CDBG target areas.• Establish a “Priority List of Codes to Enforce” that produce decent, safe and sanitary housing
<p>Objective 2 Reduce blight by demolishing properties that are structurally compromised or pose a serious threat to the health and safety of the general public.</p> <p>FY 36 Proposed Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work with Blight Prevention Task Force to map and prioritize vacant structures that are in poor condition.• Continue to work with Broome County to identify blighted properties scheduled for foreclosure that the City can acquire at no cost.
<p>Objective 3 Work with property owners to leverage resources to rehabilitate vacant residential properties in accordance with local planning and zoning laws.</p> <p>FY 36 Proposed Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vacant Property Officer to annually inventory and assess conditions of vacant properties.• Vacant Property Officer will outreach to property owners of unregistered vacant properties. Goal is to annually register at least 20 unregistered vacant residential properties and assist property owner with redevelopment plans.• Work with Blight Prevention Task Force to map vacant residential and commercial structures that are in good condition.
<p>Objective 4 Develop capacity and establish goals to inspect residential multi-units at least every three years as allowed by New York State law.</p> <p>FY 36 Proposed Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Planning and Code Enforcement Departments to work together to identify checklist items and establish annual goals to conduct code inspections in CDBG target areas.• Provide necessary training to prepare Code Enforcement staff to carry out inspections.

<p>Housing Goal 4: Pursue community development initiatives that are consistent with smart growth principles and sustainable development practices, and advance social equity and inclusion goals.</p>
<p>Objective 1 Support programs/initiatives, including public education efforts, to protect and preserve historic structures.</p> <p>FY 36 Proposed Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• City’s Historic Preservation Planner to work with Commission on Architecture and Urban Design to coordinate public education outreach to discuss financial and cultural benefits of historic structures.• Develop residential historic preservation program and target 4 income eligible households that have structures designated historically significant or that are located within historic districts to receive matching grants up to \$10,000 for home repair improvements.
<p>Objective 2 Integrate green building practices in City’s housing programs.</p> <p>FY 36 Proposed Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work with Climate Action Plan Advisory Board to incorporate green building standards in City’s housing programs
<p>Objective 3 Support public services, neighborhood planning efforts, and community development programs that adhere to smart growth principles.</p> <p>FY 36 Proposed Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Planning staff to coordinate efforts for Smart Growth Summit.• Planning and Housing staff to continue to work with established institutional structures including but not limited to Binghamton Healthy Neighborhood Initiative, Climate Action Plan Advisory Board, Commission on Architecture and urban Design to advance community development initiatives.• Use CDBG funds for training and programs that can assist the City or partner agencies with implementing education/workforce training opportunities in green industry for low-income persons.• Develop collaboration to leverage resources to implement Green Collar Jobs Corp program.• Align CDBG request for proposal to solicit public service proposals that promote smart growth principles.• Implement at least three neighborhood initiatives that educate the community on smart growth principles.

In addition to federal entitlement resources the City proposes to use the following funds to achieve FY 36 goals:

- Restore New York – The City will be using its Restore NY Rounds 2 and 3 grant funds to demolish, deconstruct, rehabilitate, reconstruct over 50 distressed properties.
- Affordable Housing Corporation – The City is actively implementing a \$300,000 home repair grant and is waiting to receive documentation from AHC to implement the \$150,000 infrastructure development grant. Both grants will work in conjunction with CDBG/HOME entitlement funds to maximize resources provided to 22 low-income owner occupied households. The City is awaiting approval from AHC to allocate an additional \$150,000. The funds will be used to write down mortgages for eight homebuyers with household income at 110% AMI. Entitlement funds are not targeted for this project.
- Private Investment – New homebuyers participating in the City’s affordable housing program will be required to provide a minimum of \$1,500 of owner investment towards downpayment and closing costs. The City’s Housing Department and CHDO’s will be working together to forge closer partnerships with local lending institutions to implement affordable housing projects.

Needs of Public Housing

1. Describe the manner in which the plan of the jurisdiction will help address the needs of public housing and activities it will undertake during the next year to encourage public housing residents to become more involved in management and participate in homeownership.
2. If the public housing agency is designated as "troubled" by HUD or otherwise is performing poorly, the jurisdiction shall describe the manner in which it will provide financial or other assistance in improving its operations to remove such designation during the next year.

Program Year 1 Action Plan Public Housing Strategy response:

The City of Binghamton and the Binghamton Housing Authority have developed a strong and effective relationship in pursuing housing development opportunities. To increase homeownership opportunities, the City of Binghamton has certified the Binghamton Housing Authority’s not-for-profit subsidiary Community Potential, Inc. as a Community Housing Development Organization. Community Potential is serving as a development partner to implement affordable housing projects under the City’s Restore NY Round 2 and Round 3 programs, as well as NSP I.

The City provides its promotional material for home ownership opportunities in Housing Authority complexes. Having the Housing Authority as a partner in the Binghamton Healthy Neighborhood Initiative and their not-for-profit subsidiary as a Community Housing Development Organization provides them with direct insight to make their residents aware of the possibility of pursuing home ownership opportunities.

The Binghamton Housing Authority aggressively leverages resources to provide supportive services to increase independence for Binghamton Housing Authority residents. The Binghamton Housing Authority provides administrative support and physical resources for the Broome County Gang Prevention Program (BCGPP). BCGPP is a collaborative partner with the City's Youth Bureau to address the needs of at-risk youth and their families. In addition to working with the Authority on housing activities, the City will work with the Authority to integrate BHA and BCGPP goals in addressing community development initiatives.

HUD annually conducts a random customer satisfaction survey addressing the Authority's physical facilities, staff and general operations of Binghamton Housing Authority. The survey is anonymous and the number of clients participating in the survey is not disclosed to the Authority. The survey is based on a 100 point system with scores 90-100 designated for high performers. Binghamton Housing Authority continues to be designated as a high performer.

Barriers to Affordable Housing

1. Describe the actions that will take place during the next year to remove barriers to affordable housing.

Program Year 1 Action Plan Barriers to Affordable Housing response:

The City continues to use entitlement funds to address barriers to becoming a new homeowner and helping existing homeowners maintain their homes. Under its Affordable Housing Program, the City uses CDBG funds to offer a deferred loan up to \$5,000 to help with down payment and closing costs. In addition to this assistance, the City uses HOME funds to help owner-occupants of single family structures rehabilitate their homes so that it meets federal and local housing quality standards. CDBG funds are used to help owner occupants of two and three multi-unit structures with housing rehabilitation needs.

To help alleviate applicants' cost burden over the long-term, the City will completely forgive its down payment loans and lead hazard reduction loans should owner occupants maintain their homes as their principal place of residence for a minimum of five years. Applicants who are assisted with non-lead housing repairs are provided with a deferred loan that is 60% forgiven after the five-year occupancy period and is due only upon sale or transfer. As aforementioned, the City has leveraged additional assistance from the New York State Affordable Housing Corporation and New York State Housing Finance Agency. These programs will allow the City to provide deferred loans of \$10,000 and \$5,000 towards housing rehabilitation activities that will be completely forgiven upon clients' compliance with the City and State 5-year occupancy terms.

FY 36 CDBG funds will be used to support the efforts of planning staff in implementing CDBG activities. Funds will be used to support the City's Sustainable Development Planner to continue working with federal and state officials in the development of a residential energy efficient program. The program proposes to provide financial assistance to eligible homeowners to conduct an energy audit and implement priority improvements that will result in reduced energy use and improved affordability.

Lastly the City has dedicated Fiscal Year 36 funds towards economic development activities in order to continue attracting new businesses and directing resources to improve/expand existing businesses. For every \$35,000 borrowed, loan applicants are required to create one job targeted to low-moderate persons within three years. Using entitlement funds to create jobs for low-moderate persons also contributes to people having access to job opportunities that will help them acquire/maintain affordable housing.

HOME/ American Dream Down payment Initiative (ADDI)

1. Describe other forms of investment not described in § 92.205(b).
2. If the participating jurisdiction (PJ) will use HOME or ADDI funds for homebuyers, it must state the guidelines for resale or recapture, as required in § 92.254 of the HOME rule.
3. If the PJ will use HOME funds to refinance existing debt secured by multifamily housing that is that is being rehabilitated with HOME funds, it must state its refinancing guidelines required under § 92.206(b). The guidelines shall describe the conditions under which the PJ will refinance existing debt. At a minimum these guidelines must:
 - a. Demonstrate that rehabilitation is the primary eligible activity and ensure that this requirement is met by establishing a minimum level of rehabilitation per unit or a required ratio between rehabilitation and refinancing.

- b. Require a review of management practices to demonstrate that disinvestments in the property has not occurred; that the long-term needs of the project can be met; and that the feasibility of serving the targeted population over an extended affordability period can be demonstrated.
 - c. State whether the new investment is being made to maintain current affordable units, create additional affordable units, or both.
 - d. Specify the required period of affordability, whether it is the minimum 15 years or longer.
 - e. Specify whether the investment of HOME funds may be jurisdiction-wide or limited to a specific geographic area, such as a neighborhood identified in a neighborhood revitalization strategy under 24 CFR 91.215(e)(2) or a Federally designated Empowerment Zone or Enterprise Community.
 - f. State that HOME funds cannot be used to refinance multifamily loans made or insured by any federal program, including CDBG.
4. If the PJ is going to receive American Dream Down payment Initiative (ADDI) funds, please complete the following narratives:
- a. Describe the planned use of the ADDI funds.
 - b. Describe the PJ's plan for conducting targeted outreach to residents and tenants of public housing and manufactured housing and to other families assisted by public housing agencies, for the purposes of ensuring that the ADDI funds are used to provide down payment assistance for such residents, tenants, and families.
 - c. Describe the actions to be taken to ensure the suitability of families receiving ADDI funds to undertake and maintain homeownership, such as provision of housing counseling to homebuyers.

Program Year 1 Action Plan HOME/ADDI response:

The City of Binghamton receives an annual HOME entitlement but is not a recipient of ADDI funds. Thus this response only covers issues pertaining to the HOME program.

For FY 36, the City proposes to use its HOME allocation (\$757,630) and HOME program income (\$200,000) as follows:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| • HOME Program Delivery - | \$ 87,180 (9%) |
| • Single Family Rehabilitation - | \$ 720,450 (75%) |
| • CHDO Set Aside - | <u>\$ 150,000</u> (16%) |
| <i>FY 36 HOME Budget</i> | <i>\$ 957,630</i> |

SINGLE FAMILY REHABILITATION

The City will use 75% of its HOME funds to manage a Single Family Rehabilitation Program. The program provides deferred loans and grants to rehabilitate single family homes of existing owner-occupants in compliance with local housing quality standards. HOME funds and funds from the New York State Affordable Housing Corporation and New York State Housing Finance Agency are used to finance this program.

The Single Family Rehabilitation Program is not subject to federal resale/recapture provisions because these provisions do not apply to existing homeowners. However to maintain investment and stability in neighborhoods, the City executes a client agreement and records a note and mortgage, which includes occupancy terms, for each HOME loan provided. The terms require existing homeowners to maintain title and live in the assisted unit as their principal place of residence for 5-years post project completion. The City of Binghamton's local occupancy policy states:

“A client who lives in an assisted structure for a period of 1 day but less than 5 years is required to pay 100% of the loan amount. A client who lives in an assisted structure for more than 5 years + 1 day is obligated to pay 40% of the loan. Repayment is due upon death, sale/transfer of title, or failure to occupy the property as the principle place of residency during the initial 5-year residency requirement.”¹

CHDO SET-ASIDE

For FY 36, the City of Binghamton has allocated approximately 16% of HOME funds for CHDO projects. Currently the City's designated CHDOs include:

- First Ward Action Council
- SEPP Management Company
- Community Potential
- Metro Interfaith
- Opportunities for Broome

CHDO Rental Projects

In the past the City has used CHDO funds to provide loans to develop affordable rental properties. The use of HOME funds for rental properties is subject to rent and affordability requirements depending upon the amount of HOME funds invested.

¹ HOME loans that are used to reduce lead hazards are 100% forgiven if client meets 5-year occupancy requirement.

ACTIVITY	AVERAGE PER-UNIT HOME \$	MINIMUM AFFORDABILITY PERIOD
Rehabilitation or Acquisition of Existing Housing	<\$15,000/unit \$15,000-\$40,000/unit >\$40,000	5 years 10 years 15 years
Refinance of Rehabilitation Project	Any \$ amount	15 years
New Construction or Acquisition of New Housing	Any \$ amount	20 years

The City executes a project agreement with CHDOs, records a note and mortgage to enforcement repayment requirements, and records a deed restriction to enforce rent and affordability requirements. The City conducts on-site monitoring to verify compliance with HOME regulations regarding property standards and information submitted by CHDOs with respect to tenants’ incomes, rents, leases, tenant selection policies and tenant termination policies. The frequency of on-site monitoring is conducted in accordance with the number of units that received HOME assistance as follows:

# of Units	Inspection Required
1-4	Every 3 years
5-25	Every 2 years
26 or more	Annually

CHDO Homebuyer Projects

As identified in the City’s 2010-2015 Consolidated Plan, a priority goal is to increase homeownership in the City. The City is fortunate to have received over \$5,000,000 in housing revitalization funds from the New York State Empire State Development Corporation’s Restore NY Program. The City is working with CHDO agencies Community Potential, First Ward Action Council, Opportunities for Broome and Metro Interfaith to rehabilitate/reconstruct ~20 substandard properties using Restore funds. These properties will then be resold to first time homebuyers. *In FY 36, the City anticipates using its CHDO set aside funds to subsidize the purchase price of select Restore properties for families at or below 80% AMI.* This will allow the City to meet its goal of increased homeownership and promote mixed income neighborhoods.

CHDO funds used for homebuyer activities are subject to affordability requirements and resale/recapture provisions. Affordability periods are based on the amount of HOME funds provided for the property as follows:

HOME Funds Provided	Affordability Period
<\$15,000	5 years
\$15,000 - \$40,000	10 years
>\$40,000	15 years

Recapture

The City will use recapture provisions when:

- HOME funds are provided as a direct subsidy to reduce the purchase price from fair market value to an affordable price, or otherwise directly subsidizes the purchase (e.g., down payment or closing cost assistance,)
- and**
- The amount of public funds provided by the City is less than 50% of the total CHDO project costs.

Recapture provisions will be imposed in compliance with 24 CFR § 92.254 Qualification as Affordable Housing: Homeownership, as follows:

“Recapture provisions will ensure that the City recoups all or a portion of the HOME assistance to the homebuyer, if the housing does not continue to be the principal residence of the family for the duration of the occupancy period specified in the homeowner note and mortgage. The City will forgive 10% of the HOME investment due for every year the client lives in the assisted structure. The HOME investment will be 100% forgiven if client lives in the assisted structure beyond the specified occupancy period. The amount recaptured is subject to net proceeds which is defined as the sales price minus non-HOME loan repayments and any closing costs. If net proceeds is less than the HOME investment due the City will recapture 100% of the amount of net proceeds. Repayment is due upon death, sale/transfer of title, or failure to occupy the property as the principle place of residency during the specified occupancy period. “

The City will enforce recapture provisions by executing a client agreement and recording a note and mortgage to cause a lien on the homebuyer’s property.

Resale

The City will use resale provisions when:

- The amount of public funds provided by the City is equal to or greater than 50% of the total CHDO project costs
- or**
- HOME funds are provided as a development subsidy or a grant.

Resale provisions will be imposed in compliance with 24 CFR § 92.254 Qualification as Affordable Housing: Homeownership, as follows:

“Resale provisions will ensure that if the housing does not continue to be the principal residence of an income eligible household that meets HUD current low-/moderate income guidelines for the duration of the specified affordability period, then the house must be subsequently sold to a buyer whose household meets HUD’s current low-/moderate income guidelines and will use the property as his/her principal residence. The resale requirement will also ensure that the price at resale provides the original HOME assisted owner a fair return on investment (including homeowner’s investment and any capital improvements) and ensure that the housing will remain affordable to a reasonable range of low-income homebuyers.”

The City will execute a CHDO project agreement and record a deed restriction to impose resale requirements. The affordability restrictions may terminate upon occurrence of any of the following termination events: foreclosure, transfer in lieu of foreclosure or assignment of an FHA insured mortgage to HUD. The City can also use purchase options, rights of first refusal or other preemptive rights to purchase the housing before foreclosure to preserve affordability. The affordability restrictions shall be revived according to the original terms if, during the original affordability period, the owner of record before the termination event, obtains an ownership interest in the housing.

REFINANCING

The City of Binghamton will not use HOME funds to refinance existing debt.

MATCHING REQUIREMENTS

HOME regulations require participating jurisdictions to match an amount equal to no less than 25% of total HOME funds drawn for project costs. Matching funds must be from non-federal sources. Match credit can be earned from fully or partially funded HOME assisted projects or HOME eligible projects that are residential or mixed use.² Excess match generated in a fiscal year can be carried forward to meet the next year’s match obligation. Match obligations are not required for HOME planning and administrative expenses.

Due to excess match generated from previous program years, HOME drawdowns that occur in FY 36 require a 12.5% match obligation. Subtracting planning and administrative expenses, the total match amount for FY 36 HOME drawdowns equals \$86,000. The City proposes to use \$86,000 of state funding received through the New York State Affordable Housing Corporation and New York State Empire State Development Corporation to meet this matching requirement.

² Matching requirements for mixed use projects require project space to be 51% or more residential and 50% or more of units are HOME assisted. Investment in non-HOME assisted units can be used as a match if units meet HOME affordability requirements.

HOMELESS

Specific Homeless Prevention Elements

*Please also refer to the Homeless Needs Table in the Needs.xls workbook.

1. Sources of Funds—Identify the private and public resources that the jurisdiction expects to receive during the next year to address homeless needs and to prevent homelessness. These include the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act programs, other special federal, state and local and private funds targeted to homeless individuals and families with children, especially the chronically homeless, the HUD formula programs, and any publicly-owned land or property. Please describe, briefly, the jurisdiction’s plan for the investment and use of funds directed toward homelessness.
2. Homelessness—In a narrative, describe how the action plan will address the specific objectives of the Strategic Plan and, ultimately, the priority needs identified. Please also identify potential obstacles to completing these action steps.
3. Chronic homelessness—The jurisdiction must describe the specific planned action steps it will take over the next year aimed at eliminating chronic homelessness by 2012. Again, please identify barriers to achieving this.
4. Homelessness Prevention—The jurisdiction must describe its planned action steps over the next year to address the individual and families with children at imminent risk of becoming homeless.
5. Discharge Coordination Policy—Explain planned activities to implement a cohesive, community-wide Discharge Coordination Policy, and how, in the coming year, the community will move toward such a policy.

Program Year 1 Action Plan Homeless Needs response:

Many resources are leveraged to address homelessness. The primary federal sources for addressing homelessness are McKinney-Vento funds leveraged through the Emergency Shelter Grants program and the Continuum of Care application process. Funding is also leveraged for service programming and capital improvements from agencies including, but not limited to, Broome County Department of Social Services, Broome County Youth Bureau, County and State Offices of Mental Health, and New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance. Local foundations, such as the United Way of Broome County, and private fundraising activities also provide resources to help individuals from becoming homeless or individuals who are experiencing homelessness with obtaining safe shelter.

Federal regulations require grantees to provide a dollar for dollar match to the amount of ESG funds received. The match can consist of:

- cash
- the value or fair rental value of any donated material or building;
- the value of any lease on a building;
- any salary paid to staff to carry out the program of the recipient; and
- the value of the time and services contributed by volunteers to carry out the program of the recipient at a current rate of \$5 per hour.

The City of Binghamton is required to provide an equal match to its \$102,153 received under the FY 36 ESG Program. The City will outsource 95% of its funds and conduct a competitive procurement process to fund programs that will benefit homeless persons or those at risk of homelessness. ESG funds will not support more than 50% of an applicant's ESG project costs. Applicants are required to provide a budget and budget narrative which are used to identify proposed funding sources and justify project costs. Successful applicants will be required to document matching sources used when submitting the final ESG report. The \$102,153 in matching funds will be derived from salary paid to City/subrecipient staff involved with operating and administering the ESG program, and public/private funds leveraged by subrecipients.

According to the statistics obtained from the Broome County Homeless Coalition point-in-time count conducted on January 22, 2010, 99% of the County's homeless population are sheltered. The raw numbers of sheltered vs. unsheltered homeless persons consisted of 223 vs. 11 persons on that day. 20% of the documented homeless population were identified as chronically homeless. The point in time survey indicates that the highest subpopulation of homelessness are those suffering from chronic substance abuse (46%). FY 36 CDBG and ESG funds will be used to competitively solicit support programs that will assist with helping homeless persons achieve maximum ability to become self sufficient.

Some local homeless service providers employ street outreach workers who build relationships with persons living in places not meant for human habitation to subsequently link them to services that will help them achieve self-sufficiency. Homeless service providers also offer case management and referrals to support programs as part of comprehensive care plans to help clients access mainstream resources, manage client influences from substance abuse, mental health disorders or medical/physical disabilities, and overcome barriers such as employment, transportation, childcare, etc. that compromise a client's ability to achieve independent living.

Although not identified within the City’s Strategic Plan, the Homeless Coalition has often identified the need for housing vouchers, especially in the winter months, to assist homeless individuals/families seeking shelter at homeless shelters or hotels. The Coalition has successfully partnered with the Broome County Department of Social Services to implement a no-freeze policy in the cold winter months. The City’s receipt of Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP) funds has served as an important resource in helping people avoid homelessness and in rapidly re-housing homeless persons.

The City will continue to work with the Broome County Homeless Coalition and mainstream agencies to help individuals and families remain in their homes and/or rapidly obtain decent affordable housing. HPRP funds will also allow the City to provide quantitative data from the Homeless Management Information System and qualitative data from HPRP case managers to better communicate homeless needs. Lastly, the City, including the Youth Bureau, will work with the Coalition to discuss methodologies of addressing unmet needs, especially among homeless youth and families.

Below are specific objectives for FY 36 to address needs of persons that are homeless or at-risk of homelessness:

<p>Housing Goal 1: Support services to underserved homeless populations of youth and families</p>
<p>Objective 1 Engage community to develop definition of homeless youth and homeless families</p> <p>FY 36 Proposed Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Binghamton University and Homeless Coalition members to develop homeless needs questionnaire, distribute to community members, and analyze results
<p>Objective 2 Identify methodology to document level and needs of homeless youth and families</p> <p>FY 36 Proposed Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Youth Bureau and Planning Department will work with Broome County Youth Bureau Homeless Coalition, Binghamton School District and youth advocacy organizations to develop definitions of homeless youth and homeless families. The group will work with Binghamton University to develop assessment tool to capture information as part of future point in time counts.
<p>Objective 3 Identify gaps in services/program delivery in addressing needs</p> <p>FY 36 Proposed Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Youth Bureau and Planning Department will work with Homeless Coalition to share results of questionnaire with community.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• City to work with Coalition members to obtain discharge planning policies from public institutions including but not limited to the Greater Binghamton Health Center
Objective 4 Support the development/enhancement of housing and supportive service programs that will address unmet need
FY 36 Proposed Outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ESG funds will be used to competitively fund programs that respond to unmet needs verified from questionnaire.

Housing Goal 2: Enhance program delivery and operations of existing homeless service programs
Objective 1 Work with homeless service providers to realign programs to steadily progress clients towards self sufficiency.
FY 36 Proposed Outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none">• City staff will attend Homeless Coalition meetings and conduct site visits to ESG recipients to discuss enhancements in program delivery.
Objective 2 Assist with efforts to reduce shelter operation costs (i.e., energy efficient improvements).
FY 36 Proposed Outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none">• CDBG/ESG funds will be used to competitively fund programs that promote sustainable development and innovative means for streamlining costs of program operations.
Objective 3 Work with providers to share program’s progress/accomplishments/challenges with community.
FY 36 Proposed Outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none">• City staff will attend Homeless Coalition meetings to discuss means of sharing homeless needs and quality of programs in addressing needs with community members.• Representative(s) of homeless service agencies will be requested to participate in Binghamton Healthy Neighborhood Collaboration to represent homeless needs.
Objective 4 Combine efforts of homeless service providers and Binghamton Healthy Neighborhoods Initiative to provide decent affordable housing.
FY 36 Proposed Outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Representative(s) of homeless service agencies will be requested to

participate in Binghamton Healthy Neighborhood Collaboration to represent homeless needs.
<p>Objective 5 Support programs and services that will help clients maintain housing stability.</p> <p>FY 36 Proposed Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• City’s HPRP team will identify support services that will help HPRP clients maintain housing. CDBG and ESG funds will be aligned to competitively solicit such support services that will help low-income families maintain permanent housing.• City will use CDBG and ESG funds to competitively solicit support programs that address highest needs amongst homeless subpopulations experiencing chronic substance abuse, severe mental illness and domestic violence.• ESG funds will be used to competitively solicit quality programs that help homeless persons access housing and case management services in emergency and transitional housing facilities.

Discharge planning is a function of the Homeless Coalition’s Funding and Development Subcommittee. There is a solid referral system in place amongst homeless service providers and public institutions to avert persons leaving public institutions from becoming homeless. The subcommittee has obtained the following discharge policies from public institutions including the Broome County Jail, Broome County Department of Social Services, Lourdes Hospital, Wilson Memorial Hospital, Greater Binghamton Health Center, and Binghamton General Hospital.

Broome County Department of Social Services

18 NYCRR 430.12

N.Y. Comp. Codes R. & Regs. tit. 18, § 430.12

COMPILATION OF CODES, RULES AND REGULATIONS OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK

TITLE 18. DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

The above referenced action plan sites the need for parents petitioning to receive custody of their minor children be able to show that they have obtained safe and affordable housing before the children will be released into their care. The district must ensure that children 16 to 20 years of age, who will not be returning to the parents home, have a plan of action requiring vocational training/ full time job and means to support themselves and demonstrate a competency level to participate in such training as established by the Department or through case worker observation.

United Health Services, Inc.

It is the practice of United Health Services, Inc. to not discharge patients to the streets. United Health Services, Inc. operates two hospitals, Binghamton General and Wilson Memorial as well as three inpatient psychiatric units and two inpatient substance abuse units. Each patient must be discharged to an acceptable safe

address. The substance abuse programs discharge over 600 persons per year. At the time of admission 40% of these individuals are homeless, Inpatient psychiatry discharges over 1,200 per year and the homeless rate is approximately 10% meaning a total of 360 patients who need safe housing prior to discharge.

Broome County Department of Corrections

The Broome County Department of Corrections contracts with Jail Ministries operated by the Broome County Council of Churches to provide inmates with discharge planning. It is the policy of the Jail Ministries to work with inmates to secure safe affordable housing prior to and directly following discharge.

The City has identified a gap for obtaining discharge policies from other public institutions including but not limited to the Greater Binghamton Health Center. The City will work with the Homeless Coalition to obtain discharge policies from these institutions.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Community Development

*Please also refer to the Community Development Table in the Needs.xls workbook.

1. Identify the jurisdiction's priority non-housing community development needs eligible for assistance by CDBG eligibility category specified in the Community Development Needs Table (formerly Table 2B), public facilities, public improvements, public services and economic development.
2. Identify specific long-term and short-term community development objectives (including economic development activities that create jobs), developed in accordance with the statutory goals described in section 24 CFR 91.1 and the primary objective of the CDBG program to provide decent housing and a suitable living environment and expand economic opportunities, principally for low- and moderate-income persons.
- 3.

*Note: Each specific objective developed to address a priority need, must be identified by number and contain proposed accomplishments, the time period (i.e., one, two, three, or more years), and annual program year numeric goals the jurisdiction hopes to achieve in quantitative terms, or in other measurable terms as identified and defined by the jurisdiction.

Program Year 1 Action Plan Community Development response:

Priority has been placed on the following non-housing community development needs:

- Youth Programming (570.201(e)) – Provide opportunities to engage youth in meaningful community development activities
- Infrastructure (570.201(c)) – Enhance staff capacity to provide quality infrastructure facilities within CDBG target areas
- Public Infrastructure (570.201(c)) – Enhance the quality of infrastructure and provide recreational opportunities that attract increased patronization of parks located within CDBG neighborhoods
- Public Services (570.201(e)) - Target resources to address current essential needs
- Economic Development (570.201(o)(1)) - Aggressively market and promote economic development activities to augment capital investment and jobs for low moderate-income households
- Demolition (570.201(d)) – Demolish structures that contribute to neighborhood blight
- Code Enforcement (570.202(c)) – Enhance neighborhoods by enforcing property maintenance code and providing resources to return vacant properties back to productive use
- Neighborhood Beautification (570.202) – Develop programming that promotes beautification efforts through education and sustainable development practices

In Fiscal Year 36 entitlement funds will be used to meet the following objectives as described in Section 91.1 Part 24 of the Code of Federal Regulations:

- Provide decent housing
 - Provide financial assistance to a minimum of 22 owner-occupied households to enhance quality of residential structure, enhance affordability through reduced energy use, and stabilize neighborhoods
 - Provide financial assistance to a minimum of 4 owner-occupied households to preserve the integrity of historic homes
 - Use 95% of ESG funds to competitively fund programs that provide housing and supportive services to persons who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness
 - Use HOME funds to support a minimum of one CHDO project that will provide decent affordable housing targeted to homeowner or renter populations
- Suitable living environment
 - Target enforcement of property maintenance laws in CDBG target areas with the goal of returning a minimum of 10 distressed properties back to productive use
 - Finalize checklists and identify number of units to be inspected by Code Enforcement in CDBG target areas in 2011.

- Competitively fund public service programs that benefit low-moderate income persons
- Competitively fund programs that involve youth in improving and maintaining quality living environments
- Promote educational and neighborhood beautification programs that encourage green practices and increase livability
- Engage residents in implementing community projects by providing gap financing for a minimum of three neighborhood enhancement projects
- Expanded economic opportunities
 - Augment Revolving Loan fund to target increased economic development opportunities for at least six local businesses
 - Attract patrons to surrounding businesses; CDBG funds are being used to provide free amenities such as WiFi services
 - Use CDBG funds to enhance current green job training and workforce programs and raise awareness among low/mod income residents about emerging green job sectors

Public Services

The City will request proposals for 2010 human service programs in August 2010. An independent review panel will be selected to evaluate which programs are best suited to address a critical or unmet need in the City. The contract cycles for CDBG/ESG subrecipients will coincide with the 2011 calendar year.

Public Infrastructure

The City will use FY 36 CDBG funds and its remaining CDBG-R funds to support mill and pave activities and park improvements.

Code Enforcement

The City continues to support code enforcement efforts in CDBG target areas with the funding of Code Enforcement officers. Some of the duties of the code officer include investigations of complaints for code violations; issuing citations and court appearance tickets for code violations; follow-up inspections to ensure compliance; issuing certificates of compliance for room and board houses, rental and commercial properties and off-campus University housing within City limits; issuing certificates of compliance for re-sale for banks; inspecting residential properties approved under the City's affordable housing programs; and assisting with State of Emergency activities.

The City is also working with the Code Enforcement Office to develop a program for inspecting multi-unit residences as allowed by New York State law. The program will require Code Officers to inspect rental units to ensure they comply with local Housing Quality Standards. All of the City's code officers are state certified and are required to annually complete 24 hours of state certification courses. Additionally, all code officers are on-call 24 hours.

CDBG funds are also being used to coordinate the maintenance of nearly 300 vacant properties within the City of Binghamton. The original survey of vacant properties completed by the Fire Marshall in December 2007 identified 278 unregistered vacant properties within the City. Based upon recent data maintained by the Vacant Property Officer, the City has 143 unregistered vacant properties and 141 registered vacant properties. As of May 2010, there were 284 privately-owned vacant properties identified in the City of Binghamton.

The role of the Vacant Properties Officer is to work with vacant property owners to ensure compliance with the City's registration requirements for vacant properties. The City requires owners of vacant properties to register their building with the city and submit annual maintenance plans or face penalties and fines. The Vacant Properties Officer also has the important task of connecting owners with resources in order to return these properties back to productive use. The Vacant Property Officer convenes monthly meetings of the Blight Prevention Task Force. The Vacant Property Officer will assess and rate the conditions of vacant residential properties. A map will be prepared to isolate those vacant properties that are potential rehabilitation candidates. This information will be shared with the Planning, Housing and Community Development as part of its efforts in developing affordable housing.

Neighborhood Development

The FY 36 CDBG budget continues to offer residents the opportunity to identify needs within the neighborhood/community and to work with the City in implementing their neighborhood development programs. Funds this year will support two specific initiatives: the Neighborhood IDEA! Form, and the Design Your Own Park Contest.

1. The Neighborhood Development Project Fund, funded over the last two years, was successful in empowering residents to directly invest CDBG funds in neighborhood improvement, however, the application process was cumbersome and onerous. In an effort to make the application process far more accessible to residents of all backgrounds, the City has developed a Project IDEA! form. Basically, form allows residents to document their idea, identify necessary collaborations, and confirm their commitment in helping to bring their idea to reality. The City will internally review these forms to determine if the IDEA! has merit, is an eligible activity, and can be feasibly implemented and sustained.
2. The City is working with United Way of Broome County and Binghamton University Professor David Sloan-Wilson on a research, community-based project known as Design Your Own Park, which empowers residents to compete for the chance to acquire and transform vacant lots into inter-generational pocket parks. Resident teams in CDBG-eligible areas who enter and win the design contest will be eligible for CDBG funding to assist in implementing their neighborhood improvement project in Spring 2011.

Youth Programming

The City has dedicated \$80,000 of Fiscal Year 36 CDBG funds towards youth programming. In the past two fiscal years, CDBG funds have been used to engage youth in community development activities while either earning wages, school credit, or educational/vocational skills. The Youth Bureau Director has utilized CDBG funds this past year to promote the following youth programming:

- Youth In Motion – a videography program that provides educational and vocational skills
- Fresh Cycles – an after school program where youth learn basic bike maintenance, leadership skills, and the ability to earn a free bike
- Summer Youth Employment Program – an employment program that involves youth in neighborhood beautification efforts, urban farming, and educational workshops in green practices
- Youth Recycling Educators – a winter employment program that involved youth in promoting recycling efforts by distributing informational pamphlets and recycling bins in CDBG areas, and producing a recycling PSA in partnership with Youth in Motion.
- CITY project – a collaboration between the City of Binghamton and Cornell Cooperative Extension that employs and educate youth by involving them in the completion of community development projects
- Broome County Gang Prevention Program – FY 35 CDBG funds were used to help Gang Prevention implement an afterschool basketball program, in coordination with Binghamton Police, that provided a safe fun place for at-risk youth to congregate as an alternative to hanging out in the streets. (The Youth Bureau and Economic Development Office also sponsored a Party with a Purpose event to raise money for the program. Proceeds will be used to assist the program with street outreach efforts.)

The City has proposed to use FY 36 CDBG funds to continue development and promotion of youth programs that align with community development initiatives. The majority of the funds will be earmarked for a competitive RFP process, and approximately \$20,000 will remain available to the Youth Bureau to develop unique programs across new partnerships and existing collaborations.

Economic Development

Economic development activities are marketed citywide since employment opportunities and capital investments benefit the entire City, including CDBG target areas and areas of minority concentration. However program requirements are designed so that employment opportunities are provided to low-/moderate-income persons in order to achieve greater financial stability. Using CDBG and program income funds from BLDC loan activities, the City has allocated over \$500,000 towards FY 36 economic development activities.

The Revolving Loan Fund is managed by the Binghamton Local Development Corporation (BLDC). The BLDC is constantly reviewing its loan programs and identifying activities that will promote businesses to the area. The BLDC sponsored a business plan competition for the second year. The competition offers an opportunity for a new business or an existing business in existence less than five years to leverage a \$5,000 grant to implement a new business or business expansion idea within the City of Binghamton. The winner in the first year's competition was H2Innovations. The business promotes local organizations and businesses through innovative advertising tools such as the Action Atlas and BiziLife.com. The Action Atlas is a map of local amenities, and BiziLife.com is an internet guide for local events, networking, and customer trends. BLDC recently announced the winner of 2010.³

Additionally, the City has proposed using its CDBG entitlement allocation to continue supporting Binghamton WiFi, a free wireless internet service in the downtown core. Concentrated in two CDBG target area census tracts, Binghamton WiFi provides an opportunity to promote local businesses as well as offer free internet access to many low-income seniors and youth who live in the downtown neighborhood. The Economic Development staff is working diligently to attract private sponsors to leverage resources to sustain this community service over the long-term.

Mayor Ryan's administration continues to respond to citizen concerns by proposing programming that will improve staff capacity to deliver quality programs, enhance coordination efforts and implement new initiatives that encourage citizen participation and long-term cost savings to taxpayers.

The City has also placed an importance of increasing departmental efficiency throughout City Hall. Various departmental teams have been assembled to discuss ways of productively streamlining and/or enhancing management of operations. These initiatives allow the City to link Community Development Block Grant funds and other leveraged resources with projects conducted by other City departments.

Antipoverty Strategy

1. Describe the actions that will take place during the next year to reduce the number of poverty level families.

Year 1 Action Plan Antipoverty Strategy response:

City staff are involved in various community groups that focus on developing programs to address the needs of persons/families in poverty. One of the efforts that City staff are involved in is reentry programming. Incarcerated persons returning to their home communities are challenged to find adequate housing and

³ <http://www.cityofbinghamton.com/viewarticle.asp?a=3154>

employment due to their criminal history. Local partners from government, service agencies, and housing have finally started to discuss how to most appropriately address the needs of the reentrant population in order to reduce recidivism and social impact as part of a more progressive approach to crime prevention. Under the City's FY 34 NDPF application process, the Mental Health Association was awarded \$6,000 to conduct a community forum to discuss the needs of reentrants returning to Broome County.

These efforts have continued over the last two years, and late in 2009, the Broome County Department of Social Service was informed that it was awarded a grant through the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services under their Reentry Task Force and Enhanced Services Program. The grant supports the costs associated with the continuation of the local reentry task force and will enable the County to hire a Reentry Task Force coordinator. State fiscal problems have slowed the launch and implementation of this grant, but some progress has been made. City staff will continue to be involved with identifying needs and developing programs that provide formerly incarcerated persons with the resources to successfully reconnect with their families and reintegrate back into the community.

Although the City's three-year AmeriCorp*VISTA project ended in November 2009, PHCD staff continue to support the various programs initiated by VISTA activities. City resources and entitlement funds have been used to involve low-income residents in sustainable development activities such as developing community gardens and participating in energy efficiency workshops. Programs have also been brought to underserved areas, such as the North Side farmer's market and earned income tax credit workshops.

The City will continue to serve as a resource center to connect individuals/families in need to programs that serve basic needs such as access to food and shelter and programs that increase income potential such as workforce development programs and earned income tax credit workshops. Fiscal Year 36 funds will be used to continue outreaching to low-income families and partnering with community service agencies to provide educational and vocational opportunities, with special emphasis on new employment opportunities within the green industry.

NON-HOMELESS SPECIAL NEEDS HOUSING

Non-homeless Special Needs (91.220 (c) and (e))

*Please also refer to the Non-homeless Special Needs Table in the Needs.xls workbook.

1. Describe the priorities and specific objectives the jurisdiction hopes to achieve for the period covered by the Action Plan.

2. Describe how Federal, State, and local public and private sector resources that are reasonably expected to be available will be used to address identified needs for the period covered by this Action Plan.

Year 1 Action Plan Specific Objectives response:

2009 CHAS data indicates that special populations of non-homeless persons that experience significant cost burden with housing costs include elderly households, disabled households and households occupied by Black, Hispanic and Asian low-income families. The City is hopeful that U.S. 2010 Census will be available in 2011 which will allow the City to identify census tracts that have concentrations of ethnic populations, seniors and disabled households. This will assist in outreach efforts to raise awareness of housing and supportive programs.

To address the needs of non-homeless persons, the City will use FY 36 entitlement funds and other resources as follows:

CDBG, HOME, DHCR, AHC, and Restore NY funds will be used to sustain the City's tax base and help homeowners remain in their homes. Special attention will be given to quality programs that provide affordable housing repair services to disabled and senior households.

ESG, Section 8, and HPRP funds will be used to help low-income families remain in their homes in order to avoid the more costly options of relocation or homelessness.

CDBG funds will be used to support green workforce initiatives, economic development programs and quality and innovative public service programs that benefit targeted populations including but not limited youth, elderly, persons with disabilities, and under/unemployed.